

Aurora

In the late morning as the first
glimmering beams of light angle
low across the blackened waters

into the darkness of northern night
they set aglow the gilded domes
of churches and high needled spire

of the fabled Peter and Paul fortress
before extending slowly earthward
to gleam anew from the rectangular

mirrors of rows of windows facing
teemed the Neva River, spaced above
them low-blowing shreds of cloud

whose flight frames a stage that has
barely changed over the centuries
despite the tow of human passions.

The Aurora's guns are silenced now
at its berth in the channel, its gray
hulk no longer commanding under
the stream of daylight's expansion.

Then and Now

Especially in the evenings
when the car drives along
one of the embankments

one sees juxtaposed one
against the other in parallel
first the gilded spire of the

island Peter and Paul fortress
topped by its famous angel
that gleams steady and softly

as it gathers and reflects
the last limpid beams of light
rising toward the heavens,

followed by the sparkling
sight of a television tower
in blue and red and white

that alone flashes brightly
behind in the distance in
generating its own waves

sent to penetrate the night
and illuminate a path on
screens across the darkness.

Here the past and the present
come together and clash
for a moment and you can't

help but ponder which one
of the two in two centuries
yonder will have the power

in the end to outlast

and surpass the other.

Arctic Blast

Under a sliver of moon
on a crystalline but
fractured, frigid evening

you can see water vapor
float like fog in droplets
under the bridges above

the ice-broken cracks in
the frozen surface of river,
as exhaust fumes sputter

white from perpetually
puttering automobile engines
and exhalations rise in puffs

from hooded and hidden
faces in layers wrapped to
protect against the winter,

each breath visible and finite
now as its moisture is caked
into particles before it crackles

and blows in snowflakes

under the twilight.

A Day in Fall

The leaves were so golden,
like a starburst explosion,
that their collection of light

blinded the eye in an Indian
summer, and while on our way
we would stop on occasion

to bask in their magnificence
before they flutter to ground,
turn brown and insignificant.

As we grow older and I glance
over my shoulders I hope that
I too may still experience bold

inspiration before the death that
awaits us can capture me: better
to burn up when re-entering the

atmosphere than hurtle onward
coldly through space's vacuum
so as not to face it another year.

(In Vyborg)